

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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EXDIS

FOR ARA ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS ONLY FROM AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PN VE CO
SUBJ: LIEVANO DESIRES CONSULTATION WITH SECRETARY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO CALLED ME TO HIS OFFICE TODAY AND
RELATED FOLLOWING:

A) HE AND PRESIDENT HAD SPENT TWO HOURS COUNSELING TORRIJOS,
DURING LATTER'S VISIT TO CALI, AND CALMING HIM DOWN. TORRIJOS,
HE SAID, IS MERCURIAL AND GOES UP AND DOWN, SO THAT EVERY ONCE IN
A WHILE ONE HAS TO CALM HIM. TORRIJOS IS UNHAPPY AT PACE OF NE-
GOTIATIONS; BOTH LIEVANO AND LOPEZ TOLD TORRIJOS THAT HE CANNOT
REALISTICALLY EXPECT OTHERWISE, GIVEN THE ELECTORAL SITUATION IN
THE US; AND THAT THEY BELIEVED, ON THE CONTRARY, THAT THE SECRE-
TARY WAS REALLY VERY BRAVE IN MAKING STATEMENTS HE MAKES IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE CAMPAIGN. LIEVANO SAID THEY DID CALM TORRIJOS AND
SUCCESSFULLY COUNSELED HIM AGAINST TOUGH, PROVOCATIVE STATEMENTS--
FOR THE TIME BEING.

B) ON THE OTHER SIDE, LIEVANO SAID AND IN TOTAL CONFIDENCE, HE
IS CONSTANTLY APPREHENSIVE OVER CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WHO, WITH RE-
GIONAL LEADERSHIP AMBITIONS, CONSTANTLY USES VARIOUS FORA TO TAKE
POSITIONS AND MAKE STATEMENTS FOR THESE PURPOSES, WITHOUT
THOUGHT AS TO BROADER CONSEQUENCES. COLOMBIA, HE SAID, OFTEN
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FEELS LIKE THE MIDDLE OF A SANDWICH IN BETWEEN THESE TWO MERCUR-

IAL LEADERS, AND IS CONSTANTLY TRYING TO KEEP THINGS MODERATE AND LOW KEY.

C) IN THIS REGARD, LIEVANO SAID HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT THE AM-PHYCTIONIC CONGRESS. THAT, HE SAID, IS ALMOST BOUND TO TURN INTO AN ANTI-US MEETING, AND FOR THIS TO OCCUR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE US PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN RISKS SERIOUSLY PREJUDICING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSTRUCTIVE FUTURE RELATIONSHIP IN THE HEMISPHERE. CONSEQUENTLY, HE SAID, HE HAS AN IDEA TO AVOID THAT POSSIBILITY; HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE IDEA, SAYING HE WANTED FIRST TO CONSULT WITH VENEZUELA.

D) IF AFTER CONSULTING VENEZUELA IT APPEARS THAT THE IDEA MIGHT "WORK" (AND I TAKE IT THAT MEANS IF VENEZUELA JOINS IS WHATEVER THE PROPOSAL IS--FOR POSTPONEMENT, DIFFERENT FORMAT OR WHATEVER) THEN HE WOULD LIKE TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO TALK TO THE SECRETARY ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL AND THE CANAL/CARIBBEAN SITUATION. HE WANTED TO DO SO INCOGNITO, I.E. WITHOUT PUBLICITY OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE IF POSSIBLE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE SHOULD KNOW WITHIN TWO WEEKS WHETHER OR NOT IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO MAKE SUCH A TRIP. HE WANTED TO ALERT ME, BECAUSE HE WOULD ASK FOR CONFIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS WITH THE SECRETARY (FOR ONE OR TWO CONVERSATIONS) ON VERY SHORT NOTICE.

2. COMMENT: LIEVANO ASKED THAT ALL THE FOREGOING, ESPECIALLY THE POSSIBILITY OF HIS COMING TO WASHINGTON, BE HELD VERY CLOSELY. I PROMISED HIM IT WOULD BE. NEEDLESS TO SAY, IF HE DOES ASK FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SECRETARY IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT TO RESPOND FAVORABLY AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE SUBSTANTIVE CHARACTER OF WHAT HE WANTS TO DISCUSS, (WHICH MAY WELL BE SIGNIFICANT) BUT ALSO TO CONTINUE THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE NOW FORGED AND TO STRENGTHEN COLOMBIA'S DISPOSITION TO BE A HELPFUL MODERATING VOICE. WOULD YOU SEE ANY PROBLEMS?
VAKY

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